

# Enriching Writing

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## Enriching Writing

All too often students approach writing with trepidation and a reluctance to put pen to paper. We all have the potential to be creative and storytelling is an innate skill, yet too many individuals claim to be unable to write effectively. We need to ensure that we spend time immersing our students in the writing process. All students can write well when they are inspired and feel supported to take risks.

### Rich texts to stimulate and inspire writing

If our students are to be inspired to write effectively they need to experience a plethora of quality texts that feature evocative settings, authentic characters, different approaches to form and structure, rich use of language and meaningful ideas. This must start in the junior years. We need to remember to encourage our students to delight in the aesthetic use of language.

The poets teach our students about fusing the language into compact and powerful texts that appeal to the senses, embrace lexical density and use form and structure to convey ideas that resonate. The playwrights demonstrate how to play with dialogue to reach and audience and our authors teach the art of characterisation. Photographers and painters provide fertile images that can trigger memories and stimulate ideas. The director teaches students to use verbal cinema to capture the intricate details, provide the back story and a mise-en-scene for a character and experiment with form, structure and points of view. The orator reminds students about the power of words, and the musician allows our imagination to soar.

Immerse students in a plethora of extracts from texts that use language, form and structure skilfully.

### Literature and writers

- Tim Winton
- Gail Jones – *Five Bells*
- Collum McCann – *Let the great World Spin* and *Transatlantic*
- Anthony Doerr - *All the Light We Cannot See* – Extract and audio:  
<http://books.simonandschuster.com/All-the-Light-We-Cannot-See/Anthony-Doerr/9781476746586>
- Charles Dickens
- Jacqueline Woodson - *Brown Girl Dreaming*
- Jen Bryant - *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*

### Online texts

- **Poem Hunter:** <http://www.poemhunter.com/> - thousands of quality poems from all periods.
- **Australian Films:** <http://aso.gov.au/education/> - Clips from Australian films, documentaries and advertisements, and teaching resources.
- **Poetry Library:** <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets-name> - Australian poetry library.
- **Poetry in Translation:** <http://poetryintranslation.com/> - Poetry from countries across the world.
- **Shorts of the Week:** <https://www.shortoftheweek.com/> - excellent short films.

- **Asiacha:** <http://www.asiancha.com/> - Asian poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Poetry Kanto:** <http://poetrykanto.com/> - A range of Japanese poetry.
- **Muse India:** <http://www.museindia.com/regular.asp?id=40> – A range of Indian poetry.
- **Inanimate Alice:** <http://www.inanimatealice.com/> - tells the story of Alice, a young girl growing up in the first half of the 21st century in China and Russia, and her imaginary digital friend, Brad. Fabulous inspiration for a multimedia narrative. Students could download or create postcards and use each slide in Power Point to write about their adventure.
- **Magic Keys:** <http://www.magickeys.com/books/>: A plethora of multimedia stories for all ages.
- **The Shed:** <http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html> - brilliant site with a rich range of film clips, images and ideas to inspire writing for students of all ages.
- **National Geographic:** [http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/#/mursi-man-ethiopia\\_39901\\_600x450.jpg](http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/#/mursi-man-ethiopia_39901_600x450.jpg) – a range of fascinating images of people from the net:
- **Tropfest film clips:** *Be My Brother* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-7IFN4DKA>, *The Unspoken* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttA2Nk-bFog>, and *Lullaby* - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIvJ\\_hsW4I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIvJ_hsW4I)
- **Award winning GGI animations:** Such as *Home Sweet Home* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKRZn0uS6eA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmqQh2o9K-4> – *Worlds Apart*
- **Backhand Stories:** <http://www.backhandstories.com/non-fiction/> - a range of short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Newspapers:** <http://www.newspapers.com/> - 1200 newspapers from across America 1700-200s.
- **Free audio recordings:** <http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>
- **Songs to inspire writing:** <http://tylerlehmann.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/the-writers-playlist-15-songs-to-inspire-better-creative-writing/>
- **TED talks:** <http://www.aerogrammestudio.com/2013/06/26/10-inspirational-ted-talks-for-writers/>

## Art to inspire

- <http://www.esuscotland.org.uk/media/Inspiredresources.pdf>
- <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/teachers/lessons-activities.html>
- [http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom\\_resources/curricula/poetry\\_and\\_art/](http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/poetry_and_art/)
- <http://www.metmuseum.org/connections/poetry>
- <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/poetry-art>
- <http://www.theartsdesk.com/visual-arts/listed-poems-inspired-paintings>
- <http://natureartandpoetry.blogspot.com.au/>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/poetry-art/>
- <http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/>
- <http://www.louvre.fr/en>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/>
- <http://www.moma.org/>

1. <http://www.artandpoetry.com/gallery/art/index.html>
2. [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/blog/combining-poetry-with-visual-art-to-see-and-feel-in-a-new-way](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/blog/combining-poetry-with-visual-art-to-see-and-feel-in-a-new-way)
3. <http://www.artic.edu/exhibition/artist-and-poet>
4. <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/jan/24/david-hockney-poets-paint-blake-morrison>

## Creating texts

- **Celestia:** <http://www.shatters.net/celestia/>: pupils explore the universe in three dimensions - travel throughout the solar system to any of over 100,000 stars to be inspired to create science fiction stories or use the stills and clips to create their own short film or digital story.
- **The Hero's Journey:** <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/herosjourney/> - planning for a hero's journey narrative and the elements of the hero's journey.
- **My Hero:** <http://myhero.com/go/home.asp> - students can read about people's heroes and add their own to this site.
- **Create an Online Story:** <http://storybird.com/create/>
- **Build your wild self:** <http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- **Voki:** <http://www.voki.com/> - create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. The students can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.
- **Animoto:** <http://animoto.com/> - an online short film making tool.
- **GoAnimate:** <http://goanimate.com/>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Pixton Comics:** <http://www.pixton.com/uk/home>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Toondoo:** <http://www.toondoo.com/Home.toon>
- **Superhero:** [http://superherosquad.marvel.com/create\\_your\\_own\\_comic](http://superherosquad.marvel.com/create_your_own_comic)

## Sites to inspire rhetoric

- **American Rhetoric:** <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm> - vodcasts and podcasts of speeches such as Martin Luther King.
- **Speeches:** <http://www.history.com/speeches/john-f-kennedy-rallies-hope-for-berlin>
- <http://www.history.com/speeches>
- **Great Speeches:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>
- <http://thespeechsite.com/en/famous.shtml>
- **'40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes':** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5qI>

## Planning

Once students have been exposed to a range of texts to stimulate ideas for writing, allowing them to use technology to plan their writing will enable them to refine their ideas, find connections, 'play' with tangential pathways and brainstorm words.

They could use the following sites for planning:

- **Spicynodes:** <http://www.spicynodes.org/> - graphic organizer.
- **Wordle:** <http://www.wordle.net/> - a word cloud to brainstorm ideas and words.
- **Taxedo:** <http://www.tagxedo.com/> - refine ideas using an image and words.
- **Graphic organizers** - <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/> - PDF and word documents with a wide range of planning tools.
- **Graphic organizers** - [http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic\\_organizers.htm](http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm) – links to PDFs.
- **Freemind:** <http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download> - mind mapping.

## Craft to artistry

*'Nouns are the bones that give a sentence body. But verbs are the muscles that make it go'*  
Mervin Block.

Students must be immersed in the art of writing. This should happen at least three times a week. Students do not need to write complete responses each time. What is more important is that they learn to focus on the power of words: the sound, feel and look of each word. Then they move to appreciating how form and structure can be manipulated to frame their ideas.

## Approaches

- **Spotlighting:**
  - Word and sentence level
  - Lexical density
- **Structure:**
  - Purpose and audience
  - Form
  - Syntax and paragraphing
  - Framing devices
- **Senses:**
  - Sound: Auditory imagery - Euphony, discordance...the vowels and consonants
  - Sight: Visceral imagery - Figurative devices and word choice
  - Feeling: Nuances and emotive language
  - Smell and taste: Olfactory and gustatory imagery - Figurative devices and word choice

## Grammar and Vocabulary

- **Grammar Skills:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/> - younger pupils
- **Grammar Monster:** <http://www.grammar-monster.com/index.html> - younger pupils

- **Grammar Ninja:** <http://www.kwarp.com/portfolio/grammarninja.html> - younger pupils
- **Cyber Grammar:** <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/index.php> - senior pupils and teachers
- **Visuword:** <http://www.visuwords.com/> - a beautiful online thesaurus to find more effective synonyms.

## Creativity

### Imaginative texts

*'Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass'* Anton Chekhov.

Composing an imaginative text is very challenging for most students. We need to ensure that we spend time immersing our students in the writing process. Students need practice and the explicit teaching of writing skills to meet this challenge with confidence and precision.

The following strategies can be used to focus students on the art of writing:

1. A sentence of the day that is based on different stimuli or has a different purpose. This can be posted to a class blog and judged each week by the students.
2. Compose a 12-word story, a haiku or a 50-word recollection of a memory. When students compress and refine language they begin to appreciate the beauty and power of words. Take away the vowel 'a' or 'e' to make the writing more challenging.
3. Get them to find images and music on the net that reflect the ideas of the story. They could record their voice reading the story or poem and use *Audacity* or *Garage Band* to mix the voice with the sound. They could publish the story or poem in powerpoint or as a short film and choose the transitions that further the meaning of the writing.
4. Focus on the power of verbs. The muscles of writing can be used as a motif or to add layers of meaning. Students could create a Worldle of verbs or create a Pecha Kucha - <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/>; <http://www.pechakucha.org/> - of images and verbs to capture a moment or evoke feelings.
5. Get them to read their writing aloud or record their writing and listen to the sound of the words so that they hear the clunks and the moments of euphony.
6. To add tension and contrast to their writing, they need to focus on plosive and fricative consonants, and long and short vowel sounds.
7. Encourage them to be observers of people and the world. Students' imaginative writing can be very superficial because they never include close observations or relevant details. Using images, paintings and photographs is one way to grow this skill.
8. Visiting YouTube and viewing short award-winning animations can raise awareness of how a simple idea is often all that is needed.
9. Invite them to imagine that they are using a camera. They could open their response with an extreme close-up and then draw back to a medium shot, and so on.
10. Focus on the art of the opening and closing sentences. Students are asked to just write the first and last sentence or first and last paragraph of an imaginative response. Visit <http://www.stylist.co.uk/life/the-best-100-opening-lines-from-books> for great opening lines!



11. Get your students to write backwards – start with the conclusion. They could use *Prezi* to do this as it encourages connecting ideas.
12. Get your students to experiment with different forms and structures. They could try flashback or an elliptical structure.
13. Masterchef narratives with set ingredients and a time limit.
14. Found stories or poems that are actually words, phrases and lines that are ‘stolen’ from texts on the net. Students select or are given a theme or an idea and then they create the ‘original’ found story or poem.

Remind your students to:

- Show don’t tell. Students need to avoid providing too much information and focus on appealing to the senses through effective descriptions. Our most powerful tool is our imagination!
- Develop a strong, distinctive voice. To achieve this it is advantageous for students to write about what they have experienced so that your writing comes from the heart or researched at length.
- Choose and control their use of a range of language features to engage and influence an audience.
- They need to listen to the sound and rhythm of the language.
- Aim for lexical density! Playing with puns and gerunds develops this skill.
- Plan the structure: the opening and the conclusion – a circular structure can cure a failure to produce a strong conclusion!
- Employ a variety of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths.
- Vary paragraph lengths – they should not be afraid to use a single sentence paragraph to make a dramatic statement.
- Use a range of poetic devices.

## Setting

*‘Sometimes the spirit of a place is so strong you may think you see its face and glimpse it gambolling over a field or peeking out of a forest. This spirit we sense in each locality would once have been described as the scintilla or spark of its soul, the pearl in the oyster. It accounts for the **magic of a region** and without it, an acute sense of place dissipates into a vague and lazy feeling of nowhere . . . It’s when we lose a vivid sense of region and locality that the spirits of the place crawl back into hiding and human life becomes pale with the loss’, Thomas Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*.*

Your students’ imaginative responses can be enriched and deepened when they begin with setting and focus on crafting an authentic place. Try the following strategies:

- Immerse your students in extracts from poems, short stories, novels, travel articles and films that develop place skilfully.
- Use photographs and encourage your students to take photographs.
- Get them to describe their world: the sights and sounds, and how they feel about this place.



- Teach them about synaesthesia so that they learn to blend the senses in their writing.

Students need to take note of the following:

- Zoom into the setting and focus on the details. Let the reader see the setting! This will not happen if they skim over the details. So much can be revealed when they do this. It could be a close-up on a photograph with shattered glass or a locket with a broken chain.
- Focus on the craft of writing: imagery, figurative devices, syntax, punctuation and structure. Synaesthesia – combining the senses – brings the writing to life!
- Ensure that the readers can ‘see’ the setting – don’t neglect those small details that can capture the essence of a place!
- Writers use pathetic fallacy to reflect the emotions of their characters or narrator. Get students to read the extract from Nam Le’s short story about his father ‘Love and Honour and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice’ and then layer this approach into a 200-word extract.

*‘... all I saw was a man coming toward me in a ridiculously oversized jacket, rubbing his black-sooted hands, stepping through the smoke with its flecks and flame-tinged eddies, who had destroyed himself, yet again, in my name. The river was behind him. The wind was full of acid. In the slow float of light I looked away, down at the river. On the brink of freezing, it gleamed in large, bulging blisters. The water, where it still moved, was black and braided. And it occurred to me then how it took hours, sometimes days, for the surface of a river to freeze over—to hold in its skin a perfect and crystalline world—and how that world could be shattered by a small stone dropped like a single syllable.’*

## The ideas

Students need to approach the imaginative response with a range of ideas that have been provoked by their exploration of a range of texts and their own lives. When a student has considered the key ideas, their imaginative responses are more focused and meaningful. The only warning is that they must not neglect the art of writing. The danger is that they can compose an imaginative response that is too general and ideas driven rather than one that engages the reader through artistry.

## Suggested exercise

Try the following activity with your students:

1. Based on their exploration of a range of texts and their experiences of people and life what ideas do they have about the human condition?
2. Brainstorm a number of ideas using a mindmap. They could use spicynodes - <http://www.spicynodes.org/>.
3. Use a range of film clips and photographs to spark ideas, such as animations from the Vancouver film school on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o31rcOUPviw>.
4. Once they have arrived at an idea, decide upon the following:
  - a. Where the imaginative response could be set.



- b. What type of character or characters move in this world.
- c. The verbs that could be used to drive the idea.
- d. How they can weave in tension through language. They need to think about the sound and length of the words. Plosive consonants and short vowel sounds can convey discordance and unease.
- e. The figurative devices that could be used to convey the idea.
- f. The structure that could frame this idea. What opening and closing?
- g. The key incidents and details that frame this idea.

## Characterisation

An imaginative response could be written through the eyes of a persona or it could feature the point of view of one or more characters through stream of consciousness. Students need to practise developing both approaches. They need to consider:

- Characterisation is that crafting of a character: the way a writer constructs his or her appearance, actions, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, words, experiences and life lessons.
- The most effective writing is based on student's lives and experiences. They need to consider the people they have met, even themselves and create one or more characters.
- The character's perception and how this perception has been shaped by his or her context, attitudes, assumptions, experiences, values, perspectives and perception.
- How to reveal the character's backstory in a few simple words or sentences.
- The dialogue and how it can be used to effectively capture and reflect the characters.
- How to represent the characters semiotically.
- Students need to revisit how to use the stream of consciousness for a character. They need to experience a range of approaches, such as the third person, the omniscient narrator and the direct address to the reader.

## Ways to build characters and dialogue

- National Geographic faces of the world:  
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/>
- Paintings and photographs off the net.
- Build your wild self:  
<http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - Create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- Voki: <http://www.voki.com/> - Create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. They can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.
- Cartoons: Using images to build characters and to develop effective dialogue:
- GoAnimate: <http://goanimate.com/>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- Pixton Comics: <http://www.pixton.com/uk/home>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- Toondoo: <http://www.toondoo.com/Home.toon>



## Varying the Structure and Form

- **Flashback:** Start at the end and show what has led to this moment. Get the students to begin a narrative with the conclusion and write backwards.
- **Multiple Perspectives:** A story told through two or more characters. Get the students to write in pairs writing as the same character but with an altered perspective, such as a hero transformed into a villain.
- **Multiple Narratives:** Different stories connected by a theme or a motif, such as: survival. The students could work in groups of three. Each student could write in a different time period but their stories are connected by the theme of survival.
- **Pastiche:** Include a range of text forms such as: a narrative, newspaper clippings, a text message or MySpace posting. Scavenger Hunt on the net: Students have 10 minutes to find on the internet unrelated items such as: a headline, an image, a blog posting and an advertisement.
- **Circular Structure:** A story starts at a specific moment in a story; flashes back to explain the lead-up to this moment, and then finally returns to the original specific moment. Students are given a scene such as: Watching a game show on television or swimming at the beach. They have to begin and end in this same place.

## Digital Texts

One of the most exciting uses of technology is as a tool that students can use to create original texts. You can open end and differentiate assessment by encouraging students to present information or create texts in any medium of production. This empowers students by giving them choice and access to a diverse and rich range of programs and websites.

Imagine that instead of a student being asked to write a narrative in word, they are invited to create a digital text that features images, sounds and transitions that represent the mood and themes of the story. Even students who struggle with story writing develop confidence in their ability to craft an original text. They can add the images, voiceover, sound and even video clips.

If you restrict it to 300 words and get them to focus on: powerful verbs, imagery and even include a motif such as a mirror and a concept such as duplicity, then the students refine their writing skills and 'play' with words and syntax. They will find voice, confidence and structure in their writing.

## Suggested approaches

- The digital story can be used to present alternative endings, hybrid genres, change a character from a hero to a villain, and shift the setting and time using power point, a word document and prezi.
- Create a digital narrative or non-fiction text such as a report or evaluation using a range of sources or texts, such as: an interview, a newspaper report, an SMS message, a twitter text, a journal entry, etc.
- Capture the memories of community members such as the local fireman, policeman or politician or an elder. Scan their photographs in and create a rich record of their story!
- Powerpoint can be used to hyper link to facts, statistics, images, documents, etc.
- An imaginative narrative in Movie maker or Photostory can include factual commentary, graphs, etc.

- The time-line digital story is an exciting way to represent the interplay of history and memory. Students could construct a timeline and include hyperlinks to personal diary or journal entries or eyewitness accounts. See *Our Story* - <http://ourstory.com/> - to create stories, photos and videos on a collaborative timeline.

## Digital Story Resources

- Photo Story 3 can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx>
- Media Player 7 or above is needed to view digital narratives made with Photo Story 3. **Media Player 10 or 11** can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/player/10/default.aspx>
- a. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/about/pages/howto.shtml> – an interesting site where pupils can view interesting digital stories and learn how to create them.
- b. Digitales, <http://www.ice.org.au/projects/digitales/> (Sydney – multicultural stories)
- c. Centre for Digital Stories, <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>
- d. Digital Drive-in, <http://www.nextexit.com/drivein/driveinframeset.html> - some interesting digital stories
- e. ACMI Digital Stories, [http://www.acmi.net.au/digital\\_stories.htm](http://www.acmi.net.au/digital_stories.htm)
- f. Photobus, <http://www.photobus.co.uk/index.php?id=2>
- g. Youth Central,  
<http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/News+&+Features/Digital+Stories/>
- h. Digital stories, [http://www.swplc.vic.edu.au/Digital\\_Story.htm](http://www.swplc.vic.edu.au/Digital_Story.htm)
- i. Creative Commons, <http://creativecommons.org/> - access to copyright free music, images and videos
- j. Resources for Creating Digital Stories, EDNA,  
<http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/about/pid/1940>
- k. Knowledge Bank,  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/knowledgebank/digitalstories/default.asp> - tutorial and examples
- l. Story Centre, <http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html> - examples
- m. The Process -  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/knowledgebank/digitalstories/default.asp>
- n. Stories, <http://www.ames.net.au/shop/createconnections/Samples/index.htm>
- o. Animation station, <http://www.animation-station.com/>
- p. Background City, <http://www.backgroundcity.com/>
- q. Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/>
- r. History made everyday, <http://www.history.com/media.do> - free video clips
- s. Stories of Service, [http://digiclub.org/sofs/index.php?page\\_id=1](http://digiclub.org/sofs/index.php?page_id=1) – war veterans in America share their digital stories
- t. Memory Miner, <http://www.memoryminer.com/> - software that enables you to make links in your digital stories
- u. Celtx: <http://www.celtx.com/> - Free software for scriptwriting and storyboarding.

## Poetry

Poetry is a powerful way to teach students how to write well. Its concise form forces students to be economical and precise with words. It focuses them on the sound and feel of the words.

The following sites feature poetry and ways to create poetry:

- **Instant poetry:** <http://ettcweb.lrl.k12.nj.us/forms/newpoem.htm>: Students can create poetry at this site.
- **Poetica:** <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica/default.htm> Poetry Podcasts from the ABC: Pupil can be inspired by the poetry that is read!
- **Wordle:** <http://www.wordle.net/> : Create a word cloud poem or use Wordle to revise poetic devices.
- **Sonnet Central:** <http://www.sonnets.org/> - access to hundreds of sonnets and recordings too inspire writing.
- **Poetry connection:** <http://www.poetryconnection.net/> - a range of poets and their poetry.
- **TATE William Blake:** <http://www2.tate.org.uk/williamblake/> - poetry and paintings by Blake.
- **Spicy Node Poems:** <http://www.spicynodes.org/teachers-3.html> - teacher resources that demonstrate how students can create a spicy node poem.
- **Knowing Poe:** [http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/default\\_flash.asp](http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/default_flash.asp) - Edgar Allan Poe's poetry and short stories.
- **Yeats' 'An Irish Airman Foresees his death':**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLvHTDa1fkE> – a moving animation of the famous poem.
- **Billy Collins' poetry:** 'Walking Across the Atlantic'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADCIXAjxe0M> 'Forgetfulness'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-a8ELOVig4>; 'Some Days'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaBeaQHdrGo>; 'Now and Then'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0xiWuwGq8M>; 'Budapest'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgnec1r9YuU> – America's former poet laureate's poetry animated evocatively.
- **Rap and performance poetry:**
  - Omar Musa, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u8dz50GbVk> and My Generation  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtscGNZxn4>, What will be left of us? (Dystopia)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YFSKhqC9rU>
  - Taylor Mali, What do teachers make?  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5yg0u1MkDI>, Totally like whatever, you know,  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGAMd-tT6fQ>
  - Sarah Kay, For my Daughter <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sSfbQk7DxE>,  
Hiroshima, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXb9N2cVUs4>
  - Rick Mayall, The Theatre <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Ho9T2TcPY>
  - Maya Angelou And I still rise - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ04>

## Muscles of Writing – the Verbs!

Verbs are the muscles of writing! They can convey layers of meaning in a single word. In the following extracts the writers have used the verbs to drive the story and the imagery.

1. Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*

Around the watchers, the city still made its everyday noises. Car horns. Garbage trucks. Ferry whistles. The thrum of the subway. The M22 bus pulled in against the sidewalk, braked, sighed down into a pothole. A flying chocolate wrapper touched against a fire hydrant. Taxi doors slammed. Bits of trash sparred in the darkest reaches of the alleyways. The leather of briefcases rubbed against trouserlegs. A few umbrella tips clinked against the pavement. Revolving doors pushed quarters of conversation out into the street.

2. Jason Oh's *Gabriel's Oboe*

Composed, he breathes life into the oboe. The melancholy melody fills the room, swirling around the child. He pours out his desires, his fears, his delights; the music softly croons its reply. They dance through valleys of shadow, comforted by the other's presence.

3. Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*

Kids were bombing off the jetty as she passed under the Norfolk pines. The water was a flat bed of sunlight and the brownslick bodies of children bashed through into its blue underbelly.

## Persuasive Writing and Rhetoric

*'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has'* (Margaret Mead, anthropologist, author, intellectual 1901-1978).

By composing and responding with feeling, logic and conviction, students will develop an understanding of the significance of language to people of all cultures and times. The following notes feature a range of approaches that you can use with your students to develop their art of rhetoric.

### Introduction to Rhetoric

- The YouTube clip- '40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes' - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5qI> - will be used to introduce the concept of rhetoric.

- Students to visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric> and <http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/20rhet/20rhet.html>, and prepare a 30 second report or rap for the class that captures what is rhetoric.

### **Key features of Rhetoric**

Students view and analyse a range of film extracts of famous speeches:

- *The King's Speech* – The last speech - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHY2UzOonig> and the actual speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opkMyKGx7TQ>
- *Lord of The Rings* – Aragon's 'It is Not This Day speech' - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdMN\\_1b2nEA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdMN_1b2nEA)
- *Pirates of the Caribbean* - Pirate King Elizabeth's 'Hoist the Colours' speech - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fINeo6sWqGI>
- **(Extension)** *The Great Dictator*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FMNFvKEy4c>

They discuss the following:

- What makes them inspirational
- The message and the key ideas
- How language features are used to persuade and position people to respond in a desired way
- How delivery: expression, pace, pitch, stress, intonation, etc. are used to deliver a persuasive speech.
- The use of rhetorical appeals: ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power).

### **Significance of context, audience and purpose**

Students analyse, discuss and respond to the following texts:

- Elizabeth 1 - Delivered by Elizabeth to the land forces assembled at Tilbury - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35djJpYpP7k>
- Henry V St Crispin's Speech 1599 – Shakespeare - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDZVxbrW7Ow>
- Abraham Lincoln - Gettysburg, Pennsylvania November 19, 1863
- Chief Joseph, "Surrender Speech" - October 5, 1877; Montana Territory

They should focus on:

- The influence of context, audience and purpose on the content and language
- The composers' capacity to engage and persuade an audience through the use of rhetorical appeals: ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power).

### **The Power of Rhetoric**

Class discussion and analysis of the purpose, content and language features of John. F. Kennedy's inauguration speech delivered in Washington on January 20 1961 -



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEPHihPw-kE>. This is to be used to model the group analysis of the next three speeches. Groups to be allocated one of the three speeches. The team is to become the experts on the speech and its rhetorical features. They answer the following questions:

1. When was this speech delivered and who is the audience?
2. What is the purpose of the speech?
3. How are the rhetorical appeals of ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power) employed?
4. How are language features and structure used to inform and persuade?
5. What is the key message?
6. Why is this speech significant?

The other speeches are:

- Severn Suzuki's speech delivered at UN Earth Summit 1992 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZsDliXzyAY>
- Princess Diana Speech - Responding To Landmines, June 12, 1997 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-p7FN9pglY>
- Apple CEO Steve Jobs to graduating students at Stanford University, June 12, 2005 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc>

## **Narrative Rhetoric**

*"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."*

Stories have the power to entertain, delight, teach, inform and persuade. We are innately drawn to stories. Myths and legends were used to teach ethics, morals and traditions. Many modern day speakers use storytelling to convey significant messages. Narrative rhetoric synthesises dialectically the aesthetic literary form and the persuasive argument. The use of the rhetorical appeal of ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power) are features of narrative rhetoric.

Since the beginning of time, humanity has used stories to reinforce important values and convey key messages. The Bible used Jesus's parables to teach a moral or spiritual lesson by analogy or similarity. The epic tale *Gilgamesh* conveyed the significance of courage, moderation and loyalty.

- Students to listen to the TED talk by Novelist Chimamanda Adichie - [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html) and discuss as a class what Adichie is saying about the importance of hearing multiple stories.
- Maya Angelou's 'My Childhood'
- *The Unspoken* - Tropfest

## **Original Persuasive Story**

The students plan a persuasive story. Once they have planned them, they are then create a Pecha Kucha (20 images X 20 seconds – the images advance automatically) to deliver the persuasive narrative. Go to <http://www.pechakucha.org/> to share with the students some exciting Pecha Kuchas. Remind your students that they need to choose potent and evocative images as the images are as important as the story. Tell them to access <http://www.powerpointninja.com/graphics/what-makes-an-image-good-for-presentations-part-i/> that explains how to choose images for a presentation. <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/> - provides an outline of how to create a Pecha Kucha.

### Further Resources

- Speeches: <http://www.history.com/speeches>
- Great Speeches: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>
- Speeches: <http://thespeechsite.com/en/famous.shtml>
- ‘40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes’:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5qI>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmz6Rbpnu0>
- Rhetoric: <http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/20rhet/20rhet.html> and <http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>
- Persuasion 101: <http://prezi.com/62290/>: An introduction to the art of rhetoric.
- Essay Map: <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/essaymap/>
- Rhetoric: <http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/20rhet/20rhet.html>
- American Rhetoric:  
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm> Vodcasts and podcasts of speeches such as Martin Luther King.
- Novelist Chimamanda Adichie’s narrative speech:  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html)
- Choosing powerful images: <http://www.powerpointninja.com/graphics/what-makes-an-image-good-for-presentations-part-i/>
- Pecha Kuchas: <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/>; <http://www.pechakucha.org/>

### Refinement, collaboration and reflection

- *Using word processing for students to present their work even though the greatest potential is for students to compose, draft, revise and organise their thinking and writing* (Mumtaz and Hammond, 2002).
- *“When students are more active participants in the whole process, then feedback is likely to be most useful to students’ learning”* (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).
- *“When students get to see other students’ work it deepens understanding of the learning goals”* (Nicol, 2008)

When students compose texts using word processing they should be encouraged to critically evaluate and reflect on what they have written. This can be done effectively through: insert comment or track changes or as a scaffolded critical response. Blogs or wikis invite honest reflection and critical dialogues with other students. Peer marking could be done this way.